

St. Augustine's Abbey

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The cover drawing is of an inscribed lead cross, found in the abbey in 1924, and commemorating the burial of the sister of Abbot Wulfric (d. 1059), the builder of the 'rotunda' (see pp. 11 and 15). The translation is: 'In the year 1063, on the 11th March, departed out of this life Wlfmaeg the sister of Wlfric the abbot'.

Ministry of Public Building and Works
Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings

St. Augustine's Abbey

CANTERBURY, KENT

by the late

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Contents

PAGE 3 HISTORY

- 9 THE PRE-CONQUEST BUILDINGS
- 9 The first abbey church
- 10 Additions to the early church
- 11 St. Mary's Church
- 11 Abbot Wulfric's Rotunda
- 12 St. Pancras' Chapel
- 13 The monastic buildings
- 14 The precinct wall
- 14 Objects found in excavation

16 THE MEDIEVAL MONASTERY

- 16 The abbey church
- 17 Crypt
- 18 Transept
- 20 Nave
- 20 The Ethelbert Tower
- 22 Later additions
- 22 The monastic buildings
- 23 Cloister
- 25 Infirmary
- 25 The Fyndon Gate
- 26 The Cemetery Gate

27 GLOSSARY

PLAN—*at end of guide*

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History

The foundation

THE beginnings of St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, are best told in the words of the Venerable Bede. He relates that 'Augustine also erected a monastery to the east of the town, in which by his exhortation and direction King Ethelbert ordered a church to be erected of becoming splendour, dedicated to the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and endowed it with a variety of gifts; in which church the body of Augustine and also those of all bishops and kings of Canterbury might be laid'. The founding of the abbey is stated to have taken place in 598; it was primarily to accommodate the monks who came with St. Augustine from Rome, and was set up outside the walls to accord with the Roman ordinance of not permitting burials within the town-circuit. The abbey church was consecrated by Archbishop St. Lawrence in 613; on its north side was the chapel (or porticus) of St. Gregory where all the earlier archbishops were buried and on the south side the chapel of St. Martin, no doubt intended as the burial-place of the Kings of Kent. In actual fact only Ethelbert, Bertha his wife and her chaplain Bishop Liudhard, supposedly of Senlis, were buried here, the later kings and their wives being buried in the chapel of Our Lady, a separate building standing a short distance to the east of the abbey church and founded by King Edbald about 618. In this church lay Edbald himself, Ercombert, Egbert, Lothaire, Wihtred and Ethelbert II, all Kings of Kent, Mulus or Wulf of Wessex and Abbot Adrian. To the east again of St. Mary's church stood, and in part still stands, the church of St. Pancras, which provides abundant structural evidence that it also is of the age of St. Augustine. Thus there are, or were, at St. Augustine's three early churches more or less in a line from west to east, which seems to exemplify a practice of the early Anglo-Saxon Church which can be paralleled elsewhere.

Early history

Under Abbot Adrian (669-708), who accompanied Archbishop St. Theodore of Tarsus to England, the abbey became the most important centre of learning in the country and its Schools were deservedly famous. The eleventh archbishop—Cuthbert (died 758)—took measures to break the tradition of burial in the abbey and only one subsequent archbishop, Jaenberht a former abbot of the house, was buried there.

Kent does not seem to have suffered as severely from the Danish wars as did parts of England further north and the succession of the abbots at St. Augustine's is unbroken.

The abbey church was enlarged by St. Dunstan and re-dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul and St. Augustine of England in 978. How far the early church was altered will be considered later. It would seem that the abbey was brought into line with the Benedictine reform emanating from Fleury (St. Benoît sur Loire) which so greatly affected English monasticism in the second half of the tenth century. Abbot Elmer or Almer (1006–22) began to prepare for the rebuilding of the abbey church and, as a preliminary, removed to the cloister the shrines which had been built over the bodies of the saints with ‘Roman elegance’. Aelfstan, his successor, in 1027 brought the body of St. Mildred from Minster in Thanet and placed it in front of the altar of the Apostles. Abbot Wulfric II, after his return from attending the Synod of Rheims in 1049, began to construct a new central building or rotunda between the abbey church and the church of St. Mary, casting down the east end of one and the west end of the other, with the intention of erecting a great new tomb of St. Augustine. He died, however, in 1059 and the work remained unfinished; his successor, Egelsin, did nothing to further it. This last Saxon abbot fled the country in 1070 and a new era began with the appointment to the office of Scotland, ‘a dominant ram of his flock’ as he was called, a Norman of good family and a monk of Mont St. Michel.

The Norman reconstruction

The building operations of Abbot Scotland (1070–87) and his successor Guido or Wido which led to the complete rebuilding of the great church and the translation of the bodies of the Archbishops of Canterbury and the members of the royal house of Kent is recorded in highly unusual detail in the work of Gocelin, a monk of St. Bertin (St. Omer) who came to England in the train of Herman, Bishop of Sarum, and ultimately became a monk of St. Augustine’s. Nearly every stage of the operations can be followed on the spot and even the tombs of several of the archbishops can be identified by the exactitude of his description.

The remarkable agglomeration of structures, of many dates and some of them unfinished, which form the abbey church at the end of the Saxon period, was considered by the first Norman abbot, not without reason, to be totally unsuited for regular monastic use. As a consequence the whole complex of buildings was levelled to the ground and an entirely new church was built in the manner of Upper Normandy with an ambulatory and an eastern crypt. The new church had been finished from the east as far as the second bay of the nave when Abbot Scotland died in 1087, and the rest of the nave was finished under his successor Abbot Wido (1087–99). The bodies of St. Augustine and the early

archbishops were translated to the new church in 1091 by Gundulf, Bishop of Rochester, but there seems to be no record of the dedication of the high altar on the completion of the church. The building of the superstructure of the north-west tower, a highly elaborate work (which fell in 1822), was evidently undertaken in the twelfth century and not earlier than 1120–30. The finishing of the western towers marked the completion of the Norman church.

Later additions

A destructive fire took place in 1168 but we do not know what parts of the building were damaged nor what important alterations, if any, led to dedication of the high altar in 1240 and to another dedication of the same altar in 1325 by Peter, Bishop of Krbava in Dalmatia. The Charnel chapel adjoining the south aisle of the nave was consecrated in 1299 and Juliana de Leyborne, Countess of Huntingdon, who died in 1367 was buried in St. Anne's chapel which she had built on the same side but further to the east in the angle of the nave and south transept. To the early part of the fifteenth century belongs the remarkable perspective plan of the east end of the church with its shrines and altars, included in the copy of Thomas of Elmham's chronicle of the abbey, at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. Another remarkable document of about the middle of the fourteenth century is the list of buildings of the abbey with their dimensions in ells and feet, contained in the Customary of the Abbey, which would seem to anticipate the well-known architectural notes of William of Worcester by a century or more. It is not known exactly when the detached bell-tower on a mound south-east of the church was built; it is however specifically mentioned in 1391 and may well have existed for a century before that. It was in a bad state by 1463 when a new bell-tower was contemplated and money was still being contributed to it in 1516.

The last major addition to the church was the Lady Chapel at the east end which was constructed probably in the fifteenth century and enlarged early in the sixteenth century under Abbot John Dygon (1497–1510) who was buried in it. The early Lady Chapel was in the north aisle of the nave.

The Dissolution

The abbey was surrendered on 30th July 1538 by Abbot John Essex or Fache and thirty monks. Curiously enough the shrine of St. Augustine was not immediately destroyed but moved to Chilham church some six miles away.

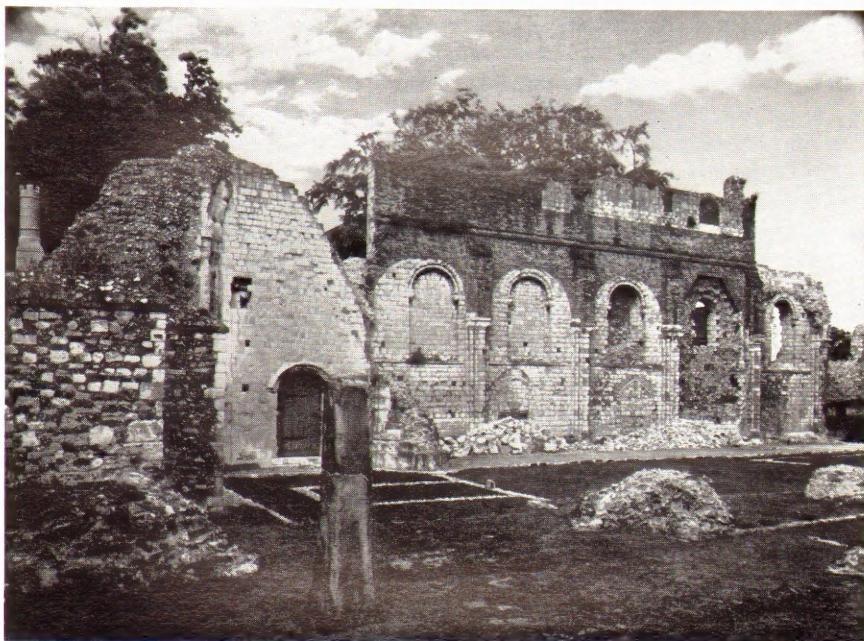
The site of the abbey remained in the hands of the Crown and work on the destruction of the major buildings, together with the construction of a house or manor-place for the King, followed almost immediately after the dissolution. The course of the destruction can be followed fairly closely in the accounts of James Needham, surveyor of the King's works, and in those of George Nycolls, subordinate of Thomas Moyle, a later surveyor. The account for the first half of 1542 chiefly concerns the melting down of the lead 'taken down from the church of St. Austen's and other places there'. The King's garden-wall was repaired, owing to it having been 'broken down with the fall of the great steeple'. This last would appear to be a record of the fall of the detached bell-tower as it is said to have been 'to the east side of the church'. Lead from St. Augustine's was used in 1541 for the roofing of the King's house at Rochester and rag-stone was sent to Calais, the same year, for work on the fortifications there. The state of affairs eleven years later, in 1553, is described in the accounts of George Nycolls. The demolished buildings then lay spread over the ground in heaps of ruins and rubbish, which 'were then felling (being cast down) by degrees and (sold) by the load to all the neighbouring places'. This rubbish was particularly from the old steeple, small round marble pillars, the walls of the undercroft, the ashlar stone of the church and other broken windows, broken grave stones, the walls of the old church and the south aisle and the pillars of the church southwards. It would clearly appear from this account that the abbey ruins must have been reduced to their present condition well before the end of the sixteenth century, except for those forming part of the King's house.

The King's house

The erection of the King's house at St. Augustine's was part of a scheme for establishing posting-houses between the various stages on the way from London to Dover, for the King's own use and for the convenience of distinguished foreign visitors. These houses were set up on the sites of suppressed monasteries at Dartford, Rochester and Canterbury and for these and also for the shore-forts, built about the same time, the dissolved monasteries of Kent and Essex were pillaged for lead and building materials, with the result that far earlier material may sometimes be encountered in buildings of the Tudor age where its presence would otherwise be unexplained.

At Canterbury, work was begun under James Needham in the last three months of 1539. It was upon a considerable scale and there is no doubt that the building adjoined the west side of the cloister and the

North wall of the north aisle showing Tudor brickwork of the King's House



western part of the north aisle of the nave and extended north to the great hall and great gatehouse. The survival until the nineteenth century of the north-west or St. Ethelbert's tower of the church and of the great gate until the present day would appear to be due to their having formed part of the 'King's lodging'. The King's great hall would seem to have been the former abbot's hall or guest house; the abbot's chapel was also retained; it adjoined the north aisle of the nave and stood upon an undercroft, formerly the outer parlour of the monastery. It had a large fourteenth-century five-light east window, shown in Buck's view (1735) of the ruins. The King's house, in some sort, represented the earlier abbot's lodging but with extensive re-arrangement and re-planning.

In 1553 considerable repairs were done to the house which was granted by Queen Mary I to Cardinal Pole and by Queen Elizabeth I in 1564 to William Brooke, Lord Cobham. The Queen stayed here for a fortnight in September 1573. The house passed in 1612 to Edward Lord Wotton, and Charles I passed the night here on the arrival of

Henrietta Maria from France in June 1625. In 1658 the property passed to Sir Edward Hales, husband of Anne Wotton, and remained with the family of Hales for a century and a half. On 25th May 1660, Charles II and his brother lodged here on their way to London at the Restoration. The house soon afterwards fell into complete decay and seems ultimately to have passed to small proprietors. The house with St. Ethelbert's Tower (as may be seen from the engraving in Dugdale's *Monasticon*) was standing intact in 1655 but the northern half of the tower fell between this date and 1722. Most of the other half of the tower, except for its lower part, fell on 16th October 1822, the then surviving part of the east wall being demolished at the end of the same month as unsafe.

St. Augustine's College

A new era in the history of the site opened in 1844 when the old Palace Inn and the brewery on part of the site were purchased for the preservation of the remains by A. J. B. Beresford-Hope, M.P., and the following year the buildings of St. Augustine's Missionary College were begun under the direction of William Butterfield, the architect. Other parts of the site have since been acquired by the college including the Cemetery Gate in 1850, the cloister in 1855, land from the County Hospital (founded in 1791) and a farm and its outbuildings. The site of the eastern part of the great church and of St. Pancras' chapel was acquired in 1900. It was here that the first excavations were undertaken in the latter part of the same year. The excavation of the abbey church was begun in the spring of 1901 and the work extended over a prolonged number of years and covered the sites of the other monastic buildings. It soon appeared that extensive remains of pre-Conquest buildings still survived below and beside the foundations of the later church and that these were, both historically and structurally, among the most important, if not the most important, memorials of both the early and later Anglo-Saxon Church which now survive in England.

After being for nearly a century, in part or in whole, in the guardianship of St. Augustine's College, in 1939 and 1940 the remains of the abbey were put under the care of what is now the Ministry of Public Building and Works.

The pre-conquest buildings

IT WILL be convenient to deal first with the successive structures of the abbey set up between the foundation in 598 and the time of Abbot Wulfric II who died in 1059. This will be the more desirable in that they have no structural connection with the later medieval buildings, and themselves form the most complete monastic structure of that age which has been excavated north of the Alps. Their remains can still in some part be examined on the spot. They furthermore present a visible and tangible illustration of the beginnings of Anglo-Saxon Christianity, the original built tombs of three of the earliest of the archbishops and the factual evidence of some of the background to the conversion of Kent recorded by the Venerable Bede.

The three churches built within the first twenty years or so, after the foundation, were set up roughly on a line running east and west, the abbey church of SS. Peter and Paul being the westernmost, the church of St. Mary built about 620 standing some 30 ft to the east, and the chapel of St. Pancras some 260 ft to the east of St. Mary's. This axial arrangement of three comparatively small churches was repeated at the abbey of Glastonbury where the chapel of St. Dunstan, the *Vetusta Ecclesia* and the abbey church occupied the same relative positions; and the same scheme has been surmised in other ecclesiastical establishments of the same period.

THE FIRST ABBEY CHURCH

The abbey church as originally built consisted of a rectangular body, no doubt once terminating in an apse, two chapels or porticus on each side of the body and a narthex to the west of it. This arrangement is very similar to that which has been excavated and can still be studied at the later seventh-century church at Reculver, some ten miles away to the north-east. The walls that were actually found are shown on the accompanying plan and are marked out on the ground within the remains of the later Norman church. They were built largely of Roman brick and were some 1 ft 9 in. thick in the earlier buildings; the pavement was of plaster mixed with pounded brick of the type known as *opus signinum*. The wide west doorway of the narthex was flanked by buttresses and there were remains of an external bench against the north wall. The side chapels, or at any rate the two eastern, were built for burial, that on the north dedicated to St. Gregory where the archbishops were buried and that on the south to St. Martin where King Ethelbert, his wife Bertha, and Bishop Liudhard were buried. The precise positions of the burials of the first six archbishops in the north-east porticus are recorded in Gocelin's *Book of the translation of*

St. Augustine the Apostle of the English and his fellows, an event which took place in 1091. St. Augustine himself lay to the south of the altar and his successor, St. Lawrence, to the north of it. Then in succession (anti-clockwise) lay the others, Mellitus, Justus, Honorius, and Deusdedit. Under the altar itself was found an unrecorded burial, but of a person of such evident sanctity that he was called St. Deonotus. Except for the tombs against the north wall (which are preserved under the shelter) all these memorials were destroyed in the eleventh century by the sleeper-wall under the north arcade of the Romanesque nave, the base of the third pier of which was set upon St. Augustine's first burial place. Of the three empty tombs which remain against the north wall those of St. Lawrence (619) and of St. Justus (630) are rectangular masses of rubble and pink mortar in which were enveloped the wooden coffins of the archbishops, the form of which is impressed in the mortar. The other tomb, of St. Mellitus (624), is similar but the interior cannot now be seen. The bodies of all three saints were removed through gaps cut in the front or back of the tombs in 1091. In the body of the church, but against the south wall of this chapel, were buried Archbishops St. Theodore (690) and St. Britwald (731), and there some remains of the latter's tomb were found. The north-west porticus retained a built tomb of similar character but its former occupant is unknown. Only slight traces have been found of the chapels on the south side, and the east end of the church was destroyed when Wulfric's octagon was built.

ADDITIONS TO THE EARLY CHURCH

The earliest addition to St. Augustine's church was the added chapel to the north of St. Gregory's porticus. This was no doubt built to receive the bodies of later archbishops, but none was buried at St. Augustine's after Jaenberht (791). It received the bodies of St. Mildred and Abbot Adrian, but only temporarily, until their translation to the presbytery of Abbot Scotland's church. The second narthex and a large vestibule with flights of steps within and without it were probably additions of the tenth century; these were perhaps the enlargements of St. Dunstan, who re-dedicated the church in 978. In the foundations of the west wall of the vestibule were found the monolithic shaft and the large boulder, now standing at the west end of the later nave; the shaft, 9 ft 6 in. high and about 1 ft square at the base, tapers, and has a socket-hole at the top. It may have been an early cross-shaft, but more probably it is of Roman origin. There is some evidence that a fore-court or *atrium* surrounded these additions, such as is known to have existed at Winchester Cathedral.

Bird's-eye view, looking east, of the ruins of the Norman abbey church and Wulfric's rotunda



St. Mary's Church

The church of St. Mary lay immediately to the east of the abbey church. It is now represented only by the base of the west wall, a structure of Roman bricks with a central doorway. This church formerly had annexes or porticus round the sides and west end. Within the church was found an early tomb.

Abbot Wulfric's Rotunda

The rotunda, unique in this country, was begun by Abbot Wulfric probably after his visit to Rheims in 1049, and was never completed. Gocelin describes the operations after the destruction of the east end of the great church as follows: '(Wulfric) threw down also the western part of the oratory of the Holy Mother of God together with the porticus which surrounded it and when the cemetery of the brethren hard by had been cleansed, he takes the whole space between the two churches for the building, raises walls and constructs columns and arches. The Blessed Virgin however, as the chroniclers

aver, was displeased at the destruction of her chapel and the abbot was smitten with a disease from which he died in 1059 leaving the work unfinished'. This structure at St. Augustine's is without parallel in this country and there seems little doubt that it was a conscious copy of the rotunda which Abbot William of Volpiano had built at St. Benigne at Dijon and finished in 1018; the Dijon building was also set between two earlier churches. Of Abbot Wulfric's building only the lower part of the lowest storey survives. It is partly below ground-level and was approached by a descending flight of steps in the west wall. The building was octagonal without and round within and had a series of eight massive piers to support the circular arcade and barrel and groined vaults over the aisle. There seems little doubt that two upper storeys were intended, and that, as at Dijon, the central space was to be open up to the main roof. In the course of building an alteration was made by thickening the outer wall and adding a large circular staircase on the south and no doubt also upon the north side. These staircases again are similar to those at St. Benigne at Dijon. There was evidence on the south-west side of the octagon that Abbot Wulfric began the reconstruction on an enlarged scale of the greater church to the west, but little progress was made. The approach to the main storey of the octagon seems to have been by an ascending staircase on the north-west side and there may well have been a pair of staircases leading up from the greater church.

St. Pancras' Chapel

The third of the early churches on the site, the chapel of St. Pancras was reputed in the Middle Ages to have been King Ethelbert's idol-house before his conversion, cleansed and consecrated by St. Augustine. It seems almost certain, however, that it was built as a church as it accords in many particulars with the form and arrangement of other churches of that age. One wall of the west porch stands to nearly its full height and the rest of the early work survives well above the floor-level, except for the apse and the north porticus. The materials are Roman brick with columns, no doubt also Roman, re-used for the chancel arches. Of the stilted apse, destroyed in the Middle Ages, only some sections of foundations have been found. The chancel arches consisted of a central and narrower side arches resting on stone columns of which one, in part, remains. This triple chancel arch existed also at Reculver, Bradwell (Essex) and Brixworth (Northants) and was a Mediterranean usage introduced into England. The side arches were filled up not long after their erection. The three porches or



porticus were also additions or at least afterthoughts to the original structure and the side ones may have been preceded by a pair of chapels farther east. The actual doorway of the south porticus, of which the base remains, was an insertion of the fourteenth century. The surviving wall of the west porch is a remarkable piece of brickwork and can hardly have been executed by native craftsmen, at that time completely unskilled in such matters. In the year 1361 the celebrated hurricane on the night of St. Maur wrecked the new roof of the chapel and killed a chaplain who had taken refuge there. In or about 1387, the chancel was rebuilt in its present form under Thomas Ickham, the sacrist, with a square end and a large east window. The work is remarkable for the extensive re-use of Roman brick from the destroyed apse. The wall extending west from the chapel is of post-suppression date.

THE MONASTIC BUILDINGS

The remains of the early monastic buildings are largely confined to the area of the later cloister. None of them is now exposed or marked on

the ground. The only one likely to have formed part of the primitive monastery is a rectangular structure (some 30 ft by 18 ft), the foundations of which lie under and diagonally across the medieval frater. This is similar to the seventh-century cells found on the site of the abbey of Whitby and indicates that at Canterbury also the early monastery consisted of a series of isolated buildings, irregularly disposed and without any ordered arrangement. The other remains are probably not earlier than the tenth century and belong to the community reformed under St. Dunstan's influence. They display the developed claustral plan which had by that time been generally adopted. The cloister itself, north of the greater church and its annexes, would appear to have been some 68 ft square and to have had ranges on the east and west sides. Various walls on the north side have been located but the arrangement of the buildings here has not been recovered. There also seems to have been another and perhaps slightly earlier lay-out of the cloister.

THE PRECINCT WALL

The only other building which has claims to be of pre-Conquest and perhaps even seventh-century date is the boundary wall which runs some 130 ft east of the north-west angle of the Cemetery Gate. On its south face this wall appears to be very largely a structure of re-used Roman brick, precisely like those of St. Pancras' chapel, though its north side is a re-facing of Tudor times. The southern boundary of the abbey site as given in the, probably spurious, charter of King Ethelbert is said to be along Burgate Way, and the charter, as it stands, is at least as old as the twelfth century. Now Burgate Way, no doubt, ran east along what is now Church Street and was diverted by a right-angled bend to follow Long Port skirting the later (fourteenth-century) extension of the abbey site. Before this diversion it may have continued in a more or less straight line towards St. Martin's and in this case the wall in question would have formed its northern line. It is thus possible that in this wall we have an unexpected survival of early, if not the original, enclosure of the precinct.

OBJECTS FOUND IN EXCAVATION

The excavations and other circumstances have brought to light a number of architectural and other objects which belong to the pre-Conquest period. These are all now exhibited in the museum of St. Augustine's College.¹ The stone objects include the top of a small cross-shaft, three capitals more or less defaced but obviously of a date

¹Admission to this museum is only by application to St. Augustine's College. It is not in the charge of the Ministry of Public Building and Works.

not earlier than the tenth century (the type is a crude version of the Composite Order): a fragment of a slab has a panel of interlacement perhaps of the ninth century and there is also a late baluster-shaft and part of a second. In the south aisle of the nave was found the inscribed lead burial cross of Wulfmaeg, sister of Abbot Wulfric II; she is mentioned by Gocelin. The cross is inscribed '*V Idus Mar. migravit ex hac vita Wlfmaeg soror Wlfrii Abb. Anno M.L. LXIII.*' Amongst smaller objects are a small copper escutcheon with *cloisonée* enamel, perhaps of the seventh century, a small bronze plate stamped with designs of a swan and a beast and perhaps of the ninth century, together with various pins, stylis, etc.

The medieval monastery

The abbey church

THE great Anglo-Norman church built by Abbots Scotland and Wido late in the eleventh century was an aisled building with an apse, ambulatory and radiating chapels, transepts with a central tower, and a nave with two western towers. The Romanesque ambulatory-type of east end adopted here, shared an almost equal favour in England with the alternative type ending in three parallel apses. It has now come to be thought that the ambulatory plan was more favoured in Upper Normandy (Seine basin) while the alternative scheme was that generally adopted in Lower Normandy, centred at Caen. At Canterbury itself the two types were represented at St. Augustine's Abbey and at Lanfranc's Cathedral. In Normandy the Romanesque eleventh-century cathedral of Rouen, Jumièges Abbey and St. Wandrille Abbey each had an ambulatory and all three stand upon the lower Seine. The great abbeys of Calvados and Manche, on the other hand, followed the other type, so far as we know, without exception.

Abbot Scotland's church at Canterbury, as first completed, had a total internal length of 349 ft, which sets it midway between the modest dimensions of the Conqueror's Abbey of Battle (225 ft) and the vast churches of Norwich Cathedral (440 ft) and Bury St. Edmund's Abbey (480 ft), all three of the same ambulatory type.

The presbytery at St. Augustine's consisted of four straight bays with an apse of seven bays as was the case at Worcester Cathedral. Nothing survives of the presbytery itself but its ritual arrangements may be seen in the Trinity Hall drawing. This shows that the high altar with the reredos-screen behind it stood about on the line of the chord of the apse. In the reredos itself was a reliquary of St. Ethelbert, together with the books sent by Pope Gregory to St. Augustine; on the top of the reredos were two shrines, one of St. Letard (Liudhard) and a second containing various relics. A pair of doors, flanking the high altar, gave access to the apse with the shrines of the saints therein. The three radiating chapels were dedicated to the Holy Trinity (east), the Holy Innocents (north-east) and the Deacons SS. Stephen, Lawrence and Vincent (south-east). In the Trinity chapel were the shrines of St. Augustine himself and Archbishops SS. Lawrence and Mellitus; the shrines of SS. Justus and Honorius occupied the adjoining bays of the ambulatory. In the Holy Innocents' chapel was the shrine of St. Mildred, with those of Nothelm and Jaenbehrt to the west of it. In the chapel of the martyred deacons were the shrines of St. Theodore and St. Adrian the Abbot and to the west those of Archbishops Britwald and Tatwin. The Trinity Hall drawing shows, schematically, the high altar and the Chapel of the Saints behind it, with a certain amount of

ornamental detail and impressionist sketches of the shrines. The whole must once have formed, not only a *Campo Santo* of the early Saxon church, but also one of the most remarkable assemblies of shrines in the country.

Crypt

Beneath the presbytery stood, and in great part still stands, the crypt, extending under the whole building, with its aisles and chapels, and approached from the transepts by short staircases. It was completely covered with groined vaulting with bands between the bays. In the central portion the vault rested on two rows of five small columns of which the moulded bases, shafts and caps of some still survive. The piers under the main arcades and apse of the presbytery have generally been reduced to the rubble core but the ashlar bases of most of them remain. Of the aisles and ambulatory, the walls are best preserved on the south side where the vault-responds and the springing of the vault itself remain, together with certain inserted or enlarged windows of the fourteenth century, one in each bay. The three radiating chapels remain largely intact except that the vaults have fallen in. The eastern chapel (Our Lady of the Angels) has been altered in later medieval times, with recesses cut in the walls and a chamber screened off in the apse. Traces of three layers of painting were found on the north respond, the lowest having a repeating design of heraldic lions in circles, and the remains of the altar itself had red painting with vertical bands. The vault has been restored in modern plaster, and the chapel is occasionally used by St. Augustine's College. The north-east chapel, probably of St. Richard of Chichester, contained a burial ascribed to Abbot Wido (died 1099); much of the altar-masonry remains. The south-east chapel, of St. Thomas the Apostle, retains the masonry of the altar but with the slot only of the slab. An altar-slab, found loose in this chapel, and now placed on the altar, probably fell from the upper church. Two stone brackets remain flanking the chapel altar and there are also two lockers.

The main crypt was paved with large black and yellow tiles and between the two eastern piers were two burials divided only by a narrow brick wall. Farther west and in the middle was found the tomb of Abbot Scotland (1087) with a lead coffin and plate inscribed '*Anno ab incarnatione Domini MLXXXVII obiit Scotlandus Abbas V idus Septembris*'. Farther south was a lead box containing the remains of Abbot Wulfric I (1006) with a late medieval lead plate inscribed '*Hic sunt reliquae venerabilis Wulfrici primi dicti senioris huius Monasterii Abbatis XXXV*' (*recte* 38).

*The north wall of the Norman nave and remains of the Ethelbert Tower.
The cathedral tower in the background*



The crypt at St. Augustine's is one of a comparatively small number of such structures under the presbyteries of late eleventh-century churches in England. They are not, in any of these cases, demanded by the fall of the ground towards the east and would seem rather to have been inspired both by the necessity for more numerous altars and by the desire to lend added dignity and visibility to the high altar. The other surviving examples are to be seen at Winchester, Worcester and Gloucester Cathedrals and the abbey of Bury St. Edmund's. All are of the full ambulatory plan and therein differ from the two in Normandy at Rouen Cathedral and St. Wandrille Abbey where the central space was not included in the scheme, but only the aisles, ambulatory and chapels.

Transept

The transept, some 132 ft long internally, had in each arm an apsidal chapel projecting to the east and a second altar against the adjoining

wall towards the central tower. The walls of the north transept, including those of the apse, are standing in places some 5 to 6 ft high, but the south transept has been destroyed, generally, to a lower level.

Within the pier which forms the angle at the junction of the north transept with the nave was discovered a small cavity about 2 ft by 10 in., carefully constructed, and covered with slabs. This cavity contained two small blocks of Caen stone, which had been hollowed out to form rough vessels, and a single bone. It can hardly be doubted that these receptacles contained holy relics, which being of a perishable nature have vanished utterly: the bone too must be a relic. From the nature of the cavity it seems that it must have been made at the time of the original construction of this part of the Norman church, which is attributed to Abbot Scotland (1073–87).¹

In the north transept was found the grave of Abbot John Dunster, 1496, with an inscribed lead plate, chalice and paten. The south transept formed the ultimate burial-places of the princes and other members of the royal house of Kent. A heraldic visitation of Kent of 1530–1 gives a general indication of where they lay. Across the south end of the transept are the remains of a series of twelfth-century recessed tombs, now repaired in modern brickwork. These tombs can be shown to be those of Edbald (640), Lothaire and Wihtred, Kings of Kent, and Mulus or Wulf of Wessex who was burnt to death in a raid on Kent. In the second and third of these tombs were found lead plates of the twelfth century inscribed (a) '*Hic requiescit Lotharus rex Anglorum VIII idus Feb. obiit an. DCLXXXV*' and (b) '*Hic requiescit Wihtredus rex Anglorum VIII Kal. Mai obiit anno DCCXXV*'. Nearby lay King Erconbert of Kent who died in 664. Near the middle of the east side of the transept was found the burial of Abbot Roger II, 1272, whose body lay in a built grave lined with sheet lead and containing a ring and an inscribed lead plate. The head lay upon a pillow-stone, a notable survival of an early custom. The piers formerly supporting the central tower have been much demolished, but a certain amount of the plinths of the western pair survives.

¹The late Dr. Rose Graham refers to Thorne's history of the monastery (late fourteenth century) which record that 'many relics of Saints were hidden in various parts of the church, to be found when it shall please God and his Saints'. This, it is implied, took place not when Abbot Scotland built the eastern arm of the church, but when his successor Wido moved the tomb of St. Augustine in c. 1090. Wido also built the nave, and it may be that this junction of nave and transept walls was not actually completed till his time. It is certainly tempting to connect this discovery with a recorded hiding of holy relics. The bone is a sheep's tibia.

Nave

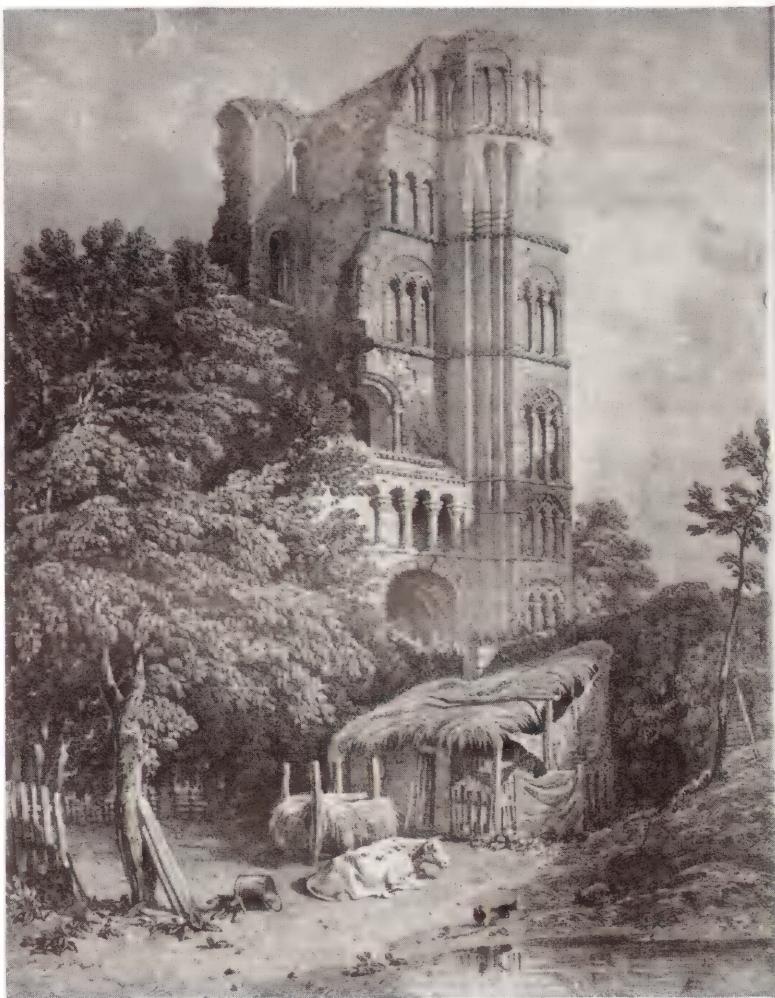
The nave was a structure of eleven bays with a pair of west towers in addition. It has been much destroyed and little is left of the main arcades but a certain amount of rubble core, and here and there parts of the plinths of the piers. The floor-level is 3 ft above that of the Saxon church which was swept away when the Romanesque church was built. Doubtless owing to the made-up nature of the ground, the piers of the arcade are carried on heavy sleeper-walls. The nave remained almost unaltered, but at the west end there are some indications of fifteenth-century repairs or alterations, particularly to the north-west tower, where an arch was inserted in its south wall. The excavations showed that the monks' choir was bounded on the west by the great screen or pulpitum which occupied most of the east bay of the nave. Separated from it by the retro-choir was the rood-screen standing between the second pair of piers of the nave; against this screen was the nave altar and above it the great rood. The south aisle has largely disappeared except for the core of the south wall but a considerable portion of the outer wall of the north aisle still stands. This applies to the six western bays most of which were retained because they formed the terminal wall on the south side of Henry VIII's Manor Place. In the original wall the round-headed windows (the two westernmost being blind) and the vaulting-shafts between each bay survive largely intact, except that the vaulting itself has been removed and the wall above has been made good and heightened in Tudor brickwork.

In the same wall are three doorways, the easternmost opening into the cloister, altered on the south side in Tudor times, the second of the thirteenth century and the westernmost of the twelfth century and probably an insertion. Above the aisle stood an unusually high triforium-passage, with two original windows, still remaining, in the outer wall.

The Ethelbert Tower

At the end of the north aisle stood, till 1822, the north-west or St. Ethelbert's Tower. It was a structure of about 1120–30 of which only some parts of the ground storey, with fifteenth-century alterations and insertions, survive to the present day. It had a stone vault and some of the original detail remains. Fortunately several drawings were made of this tower, notably one by J. D. Harding, reproduced on page 21. His drawing indicates that the tower was amongst the most ornate and elaborate examples of enriched Romanesque work in the country and that its loss was a major artistic disaster. It should be noted that the grouping of the arcading within round-headed bays is a highly unusual

The Ethelbert Tower before its fall in 1822



Reproduced by courtesy of the Royal Museum, Canterbury

and effective device and the transition from the square to the octagon in the angle turret is both ingenious and successful. Little but foundations remain of the corresponding tower at the end of the south aisle.

Later additions

So far as the church is concerned there remain to be considered only the late additions to the building, and of these the most important is the large Lady Chapel at the east end. It was originally erected, perhaps, sometime in the fifteenth century as a rectangular building of four bays with a crypt below it. Early in the sixteenth century, however, it was enlarged under Abbot John Dygon (1497–1510) whose tomb was found within it; this contained an inscribed lead plate, a painted lead mitre, two rings and a chalice and paten. The enlargement of the chapel consisted of two aisles or ranges of chapels to the north and south forming five bays, and it may be presumed that arches or doorways were cut in the earlier side-walls to give access to them.

The other two late additions to the church are the small chapel of St. Anne in the angle between the south transept and nave, and the Charnel chapel farther west. The former was built by Juliana de Leyborne who died in 1367. The Charnel chapel was consecrated in 1299.

THE MONASTIC BUILDINGS

The medieval monastic buildings at St. Augustine's Abbey all lay, like their pre-Conquest predecessors, to the north of the church. Nearly all have now been excavated except parts of the undercroft of the great dormitory and the rere-dorter presumably to the north-east of it.

It should be remembered that the cloister formed the centre of the common life of the community; here the monks passed much of the day and the novices received instruction. The frater or refectory was the common dining-hall, and the dorter or dormitory generally had two staircases of access, one the day-stairs rising from the cloister and the other the night-stairs communicating directly with the church and used for the night offices. The chapter-house was the room where the convent met daily, business was transacted and internal discipline maintained. The monks had three other apartments communicating with the cloister—the calefactory, or common room or warming house, often under the dormitory and provided with a fireplace, and the inner and outer parlours. The former was for intercourse between the members of the house amongst themselves, and the latter for intercourse between the monks and their relatives or tradespeople from the outside world. Also adjoining the cloister was, commonly, the cellar

(cellarium) or storehouse of the cellarer or caterer of the establishment. It is not quite apparent where this stood at St. Augustine's but it may have occupied part of the vast undercroft of the dormitory.

Cloister

The cloister (122 ft by 117 ft), to the north of the nave, has been much destroyed except on the west side; the arcade-wall has been everywhere reduced to its foundations. It was rebuilt under Abbot Nicholas Thorne in and about the year 1276. It was not stone-vaulted and the windows in the west alley are represented in certain eighteenth-century engravings. Projecting into the garth from the north walk, opposite the entrance to the refectory was an irregular semi-heptagonal lavatory built under Abbot Roger II in 1272. The foundations of this building have been uncovered and are now set out on the surface; it belonged to a type of lavatory not very common in England but to be found formerly at Canterbury Cathedral, Lewes Priory, St. Nicholas Priory Exeter, Croxden Abbey, Wenlock Priory, Sherborne Abbey, and Durham Cathedral.

The eastern processional entrance to the church is now represented only by a restored semi-circular flight of steps within the cloister; there is a deep recess of unknown purpose to the west of it. The western processional entrance, now blocked, is of late eleventh- or early twelfth-century date and has a damaged semi-circular head on the north face. The thirteenth-century west wall of the cloister is still standing some 12 ft high. The elaborately shafted doorway at the south end gave access to the outer parlour where the monks might have contact with laymen. Near the north end of the same wall is a doorway of about 1300. Probably above one walk of the cloister, perhaps the eastern, was a long narrow building (104 ft by 11 ft) recorded in the Customary of the Abbey and there called the *Studia*, no doubt the scriptorium of the abbey. In the east wall of the cloister, where it adjoins the transept, are the remains of an elaborately treated recess, probably a book-cupboard, with moulded and shafted jambs and a sill all of Purbeck marble.

The buildings on the east side of the cloister are now filled in and not visible; from south to north, they were the sacristy, the chapter house, the passage to the infirmary and the great dorter standing upon an undercroft. Nearly all these had been destroyed to within a few feet of the floor-level except the north gable-end of the dormitory range and two isolated buttresses against its west wall. The sacristy, now uncovered, was a narrow apartment provided with lockers in both side walls.

The chapter house (84 ft by 32 ft) to the north of it, originally a building of early twelfth-century date, was largely refaced or re-fashioned after 1382 though the main walls of the earlier building seem to have survived. Round the walls ran the usual bench and upon it stood a continuous wall-arcade of which the bases of many of the shafts remained. In the chapter-house, as was usual, were buried many of the abbots: eight have been identified, namely, Hugh I Flory, 1124; Hugh II of Trottescliff, 1151; Sylvester, 1161; Roger I of Sardingden, 1212; Alexander, 1220; William of Thurleugh, 1346; Michael Pecham, 1387; and William Welde, 1405. Next to the chapter-house was a narrow passage to the infirmary, giving access also by a newel-staircase to the dormitory. The dormitory undercroft was a very large apartment 193 ft by 42 ft and divided up by two rows of circular columns supporting the vault. It was built early in the twelfth century under Abbot Hugh I. A doorway opened into it from the infirmary-passage and within this was a twelfth-century stone bench with a shaped and shafted arm-rest, now in the museum. The Customary of the Abbey records that the rere-dorter or common latrine was a vast building 193 ft long by 24 ft wide; it no doubt stood at right angles to the north end of the dormitory, but no remains of it have yet been found.

On the north side of the cloister stood the frater and the foundations of two successive buildings have been uncovered. The first was no doubt a building of the twelfth century, but this was pulled down and rebuilt and greatly widened under Abbot Roger II between the years 1260–9. The south wall, on the cloister side, had a more or less continuous wall-arcade of which traces remain. The double bays at the west end are more complete and retain some Purbeck marble details. They may be remains of the earlier lavatory built in 1267. The frater had a row of buttresses against the north wall, and a little farther north stood the conventional kitchen, a hexagonal building some 40 ft across and with diagonal buttresses. It was begun in 1287 and finished four years later at a cost of £414.

Along the west side of the cloister stood the buildings which, at any rate on the first floor, formed the abbot's lodging. They were much altered when incorporated, in the sixteenth century, in Henry VIII's Manor Place. On the first floor against the wall of the church and above the outer parlour stood the abbot's chapel, rebuilt about 1300 by Abbot Fyndon. It survived until the eighteenth century and the handsome east window of five lights is shown intact in Buck's view of the ruins of 1735. Only the base of the jambs of this window now remain. The outer parlour had a stone barrel-vault, of which the springing on

the aisle-wall can be seen. The marks of the low-pitched roof of the west range, before the building of the abbot's chapel, appear high up on the same wall. The abbot's guest hall and parlour, both of late thirteenth-century date, have been very largely rebuilt and now form part of the buildings of St. Augustine's College.

Infirmary

The infirmary, forming a considerable complex of buildings to the east of the dormitory, has been completely excavated but now lies under the turf of the playing fields. It consisted of a large late twelfth-century hall with an aisle along the east side and an aisled infirmary chapel of the same period extending to the east of it. To this various subsidiary buildings were added during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The infirmary was approached by a long passage from the east side of the dormitory range.

The Fyndon Gate

The precinct of St. Augustine's Abbey was enclosed by a wall of which several stretches survive. The southern part represents a fourteenth-century extension but the wall on the west is earlier. The Great Gatehouse called the Fyndon Gate was rebuilt under Abbot Thomas Fyndon between the years 1300–9. It is a handsome two-storeyed building with enriched octagonal turrets at the front and smaller square ones at the back. The arched entrance has a ribbed stone vault of two bays and above it is a large chamber with an arcaded front and an enriched parapet. This gateway was much damaged by enemy action in 1942, but has been carefully restored. Adjoining the gate on the south are some remains of the guest house with its hall and chapel; to the north of the gate and at right angles to it is a Tudor archway dating from after the dissolution of the abbey.

The Fyndon Gate forms the entrance to St. Augustine's College and in a building adjoining the library on the south is the museum containing all the principal objects found in the course of the excavations. These include the inscribed lead plates, coffin chalices and patens, found in the graves of various abbots and mentioned above; the lead mitre of Abbot Dygon; the pre-Conquest objects already referred to (p. 14); two standing medieval figures with remains of colour but headless; and numerous carved stones from the twelfth century onwards, including some delicately carved heads, a carved corbel (twelfth century) with the inscription *Robertus me fecit*, and a thirteenth-century stone lectern carved with a man's head.

The Cemetery Gate

The second medieval gatehouse of the abbey, called the Cemetery Gate, stands opposite the end of Church Street and some 150 yards south of the Fyndon Gate. It was built about 1390 under Thomas Ickham, sacrist. In general form it is not unlike the Fyndon Gate but is far less ornate. Two octagonal turrets flank the front and between them the upper storey has machicolations and an embattled parapet. It has been unsympathetically restored, the archways of the gate are blocked, and it is now occupied as a dwelling.

Glossary

AISLE	Part of the church on either side of the nave or chancel.
AMBULATORY	A wide passage behind the high altar.
APSE	A semi-circular end to or projection from a building.
APSIDAL	Ending in an apse.
ARCADE	A line of arches.
ASHLAR	Squared block(s) of stone.
BARREL-VAULT	Vault with semi-cylindrical roof.
BAY	A structural division of the length of a building or roof.
BLIND ARCADE	Line of arches used for decoration, with solid wall surface behind.
CALEFACTORY	Warming-house, the only room besides the kitchen in which a fire was allowed in a monastery according to the primitive rule.
CAPITAL	Decorated member between an arch and the pillar from which it springs.
CHAMFER	Bevelled or mitred angle, without moulding.
CHAPTER-HOUSE	Room in which the brethren met daily for monastic business, when an article or chapter (<i>capitulum</i>) of the monastic rule was read.
CHOIR	Part of the church between the presbytery and the nave containing the stalls where the monks sat to sing the offices.
CLAUSTRAL	To do with or belonging to a cloister.
CLERESTORY	Row of windows set above the line of the aisle roofs and admitting light to the central part of church.
CLOISTER	Four-sided enclosure, with a covered walk along each side.
CROSSING	The centre of monastic life.
CRYPT	Central space where the east-west axis of church is crossed by the north-south transept, usually surmounted by central tower.
DORTER	A vault under a building, usually at least partly below ground-level.
FRATER	Dormitory.
GARDEROBE	Refectory, or dining-hall.
LAVATORY	A latrine or privy.
MEDIEVAL	A trough with running water where the monks washed their hands before meals.
NARTHEX	Of or belonging to the Middle Ages.
NAVE	A portico or porch at the entrance of an early church, beyond which only fully professed Christians might pass.
NEWEL-STAIRCASE	Part of the church extending west from the crossing, separated from the side aisles by arcades.
PARLOUR	Spiral staircase.
PIER	A room in which conversation was allowed.
PLINTH	Main pillar.
PORTICUS	Projecting masonry, often with decorative mouldings, at base of a wall.
PRESBYTERY	In an early church, a wing additional to the main body of the church.
PULPITUM	Eastern part of the church containing principal altar and reserved for the clergy.
	Partition between nave and choir.

QUIRE	Choir.
REFECTORY	Dining-hall.
RERE-DORTER	Building containing the latrines, usually flushed by a channel of running water.
REREDOS	An ornamental screen at the back of an altar.
RESPOND	Half-column or half-capital where an arch or line of arches joins a wall
RETRO-CHOIR	The space, usually one bay, between the pulpitum and the rood-screen.
RIB	Part of a stone framework supporting vaulted roof.
ROOD-SCREEN	Division between the nave and choir of the church, surmounted by a crucifix.
SACRISTY	Place for keeping sacred vessels and vestments.
SHAFT	Small or subordinate pillar.
SLEEPER-WALL	A wall existing only below floor-level.
TRANSEPT	Transverse part of a cruciform church, set at right angles to the main axis.
TRIFORIUM	An arcaded gallery between the main arcade and the clerestory.
VAULTING	Arched work composing a stone roof.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S ABBEY

Canterbury

Pre-Conquest

Late 11th century

12th century

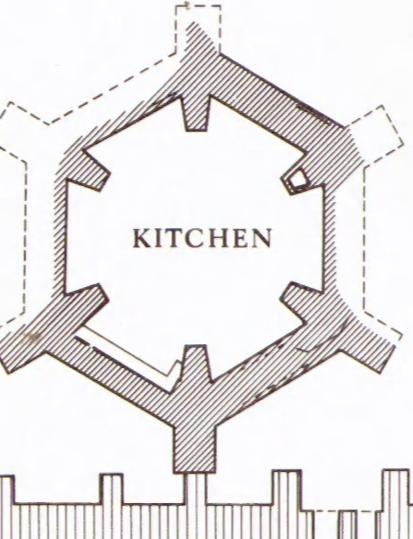
13th century

Late 13th & early 14th century

14th century

15th century

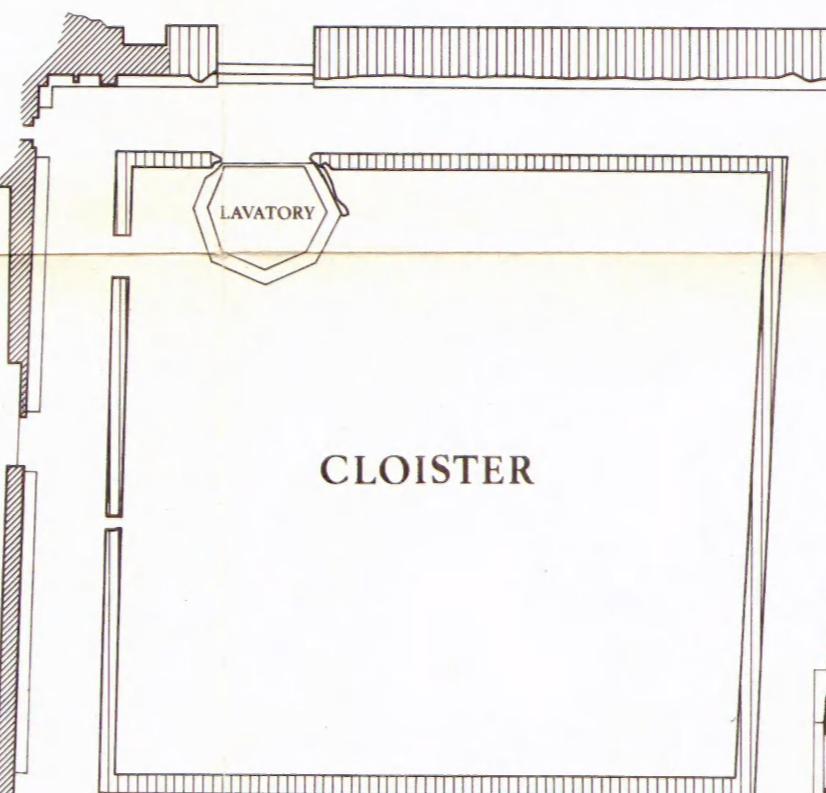
16th century



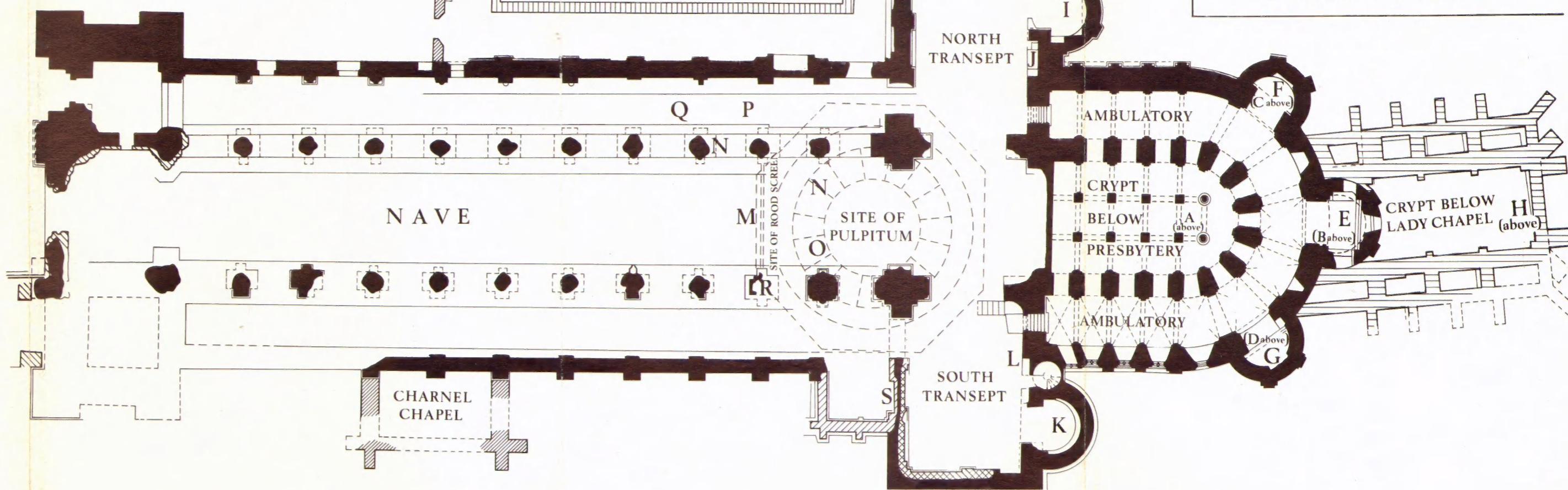
DORMITORY
(above)

10 5 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 FEET
5 0 5 10 15 20 25 METRES

FRATER



SITE OF
CHAPTER
HOUSE



ALTARS IN ST. AUGUSTINE'S ABBEY

A SS. PETER & PAUL,
AUGUSTINE & HIS COMPANIONS

B HOLY TRINITY

C HOLY INNOCENTS

D SS. STEPHEN, LAURENCE & VINCENT

E OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS

F ST. RICHARD OF CHICHESTER

G ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE

H OUR LADY

I ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

J ST. BENEDICT

K ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

L ST. KATHARINE

M HOLY CROSS

N ST. GREGORY

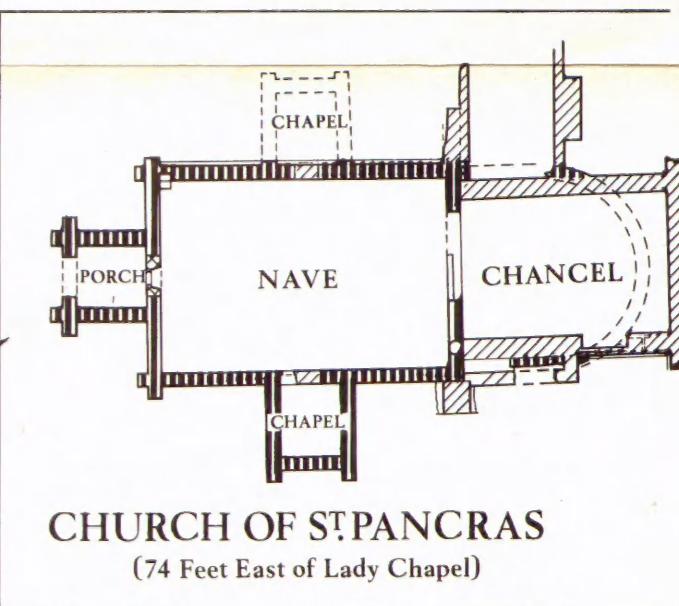
O ST. JOHN

P OUR LADY

Q ST. STEPHEN & ST. MARY MAGDALEN

R ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LADY

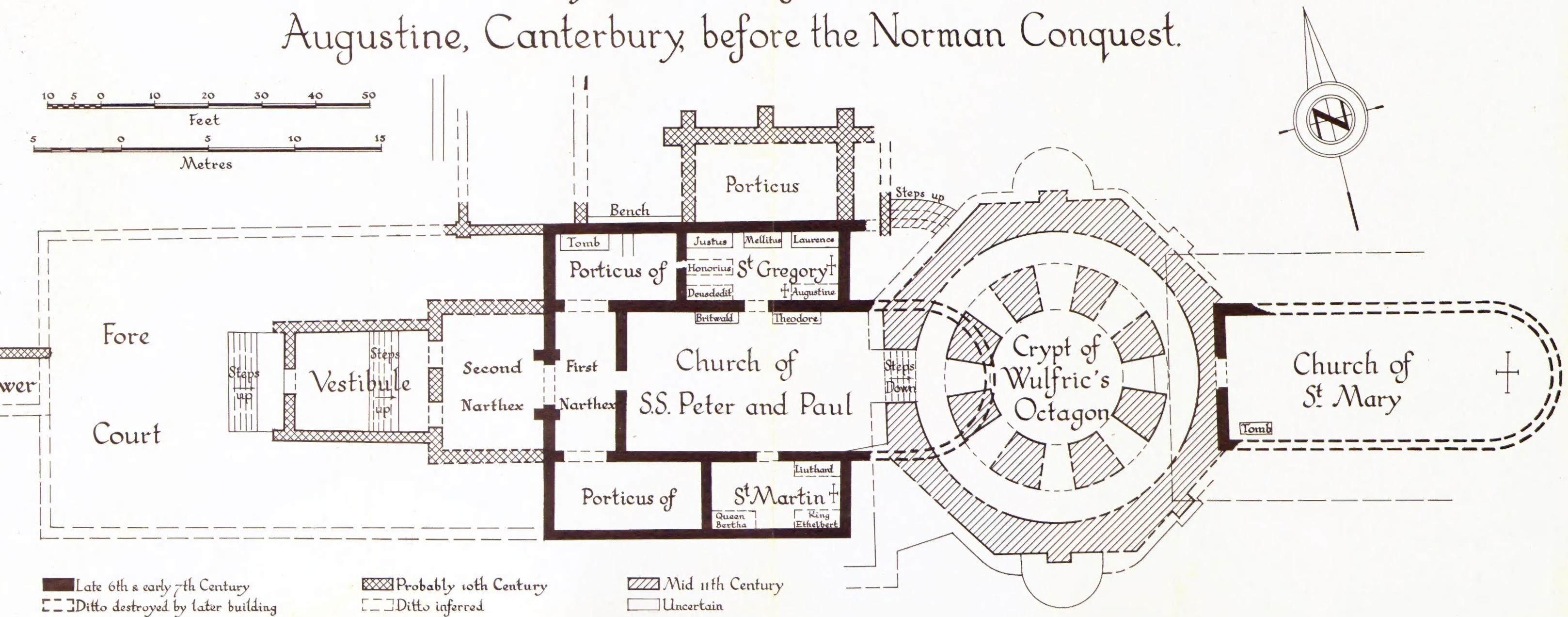
S ST. ANNE



CHURCH OF ST. PANCRAS
(74 Feet East of Lady Chapel)

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The Saxon Abbey Church of S.S. Peter, Paul and Augustine, Canterbury, before the Norman Conquest.



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